

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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MADRID PLEASE PASS AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PO

SUBJ: VIOLENCE AND LAW AND ORDER: SOME ILLUSTRATIVE INCIDENTS

REF: (A) LISBON 3044; (B) LISBON 1062

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH ELECTION CAMPAIGN HAS COME AND GONE, POLITICAL VIOLENCE HAS STAYED. THREE RECENT, SEPARATE INCIDENTS ILLUSTRATE HOW ACTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE HAVE BECOME A FAMILIAR PART OF SCENE. END SUMMARY

1. WITHIN THE LAST FEW DAYS THE FOLLOWING INCIDENTS HAVE OCCURRED:

A. JUNE 6 -- DEMONSTRATORS IN BRAGANCA ATTACKED MDP ADHERENTS AND INFLICTED BEATINGS;

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B. JUNE 7 -- NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPHER ATTACKED WHILE COVERING

MRPP DEMONSTRATION NEW CAXIAS PRISON;

C. JUNE 8 -- PDC MEMBERS BEATEN AFTER THEIR MEETING BROKE UP IN EVORA.

2. BRAGANCA: IN THE HEART OF CONSERVATIVE NORTHERN PORTUGAL, BRAGANCA ATTACK ALLEGEDLY MADE BY MILITANTS OF PARTIDO POPULAR DEMOCRATICO (PPD), SOCIALISTS (PS), AND CENTRO DEMOCRATICO SOCIAL (CDS) ON ADHERENTS OF COMMUNIST-LINING PORTUGUESE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MDP). WHAT IS CLEAR IS THAT FIRST THREE GROUPS ALL PROTESTED STATEMENTS MADE BY MDP LEADER CALLING FOR PURGE OF LOCAL CIVIL AUTHORITIES FOR BEING SOFT ON "REACTION." DURING DEMONSTRATION SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED TO SUPPORT LOCAL CIVIL AUTHORITIES, CROWD MARCHED ON MDP HEADQUARTERS AND, UPON RECOGNIZING AUTHOR OF OFFENSIVE STATEMENTS, SEIZED AND BEAT HIM UP. MILITARY UNITS INTERVENED TO RESTOR ORDER.

3. CAXIAS: MAOIST MRPP CALLED PROTEST DEMONSTRATION AT SITE OF MILITARY FORT WHERE THEIR ARRESTED COLLEAGUES ARE IMPRISONED (REF A). AT CERTAIN POINT PHOTOGRAPHER FOR COMMUNIST-DOMINATED LISBON PAPER "SEculo" WAS SPOTTED; DEMONSTRATORS DEMANDED HE PRODUCE DOCUMENTATION WHICH, ONCE HE DECLINED, LED TO HIS IMMEDIATE AND APPARENTLY ORGANIZED BEATING. COMMUNIST-LINING "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS" ASKED EDITORIALY JUNE 9 IF THIS INCIDENT SHOWED THAT MILITARY AUTHORITIES WERE SANCTIONING VIOLENCE, SINCE EVENT OCCURRED IN AREA WHERE MILITARY'S PRESENCE WAS PRONOUNCED. COPCON RESPONDED THAT IT REGRETTED INCIDENT HAD OCCURRED, BUT THAT IT OCCURRED OUT OF SOLDIERS' SIGHT. ONCE MILITARY AUTHORITIES BECAME AWARE OF BEATING, THE ATTEMPTED ASSIST PHOTOGRAPHER.

4. EVORA: FAR LEFT GROUPS LEARNED OF MEETING OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (PDC), GATHERED AT SCENE, AND BROKE UP MEETING. MILITARY AUTHORITIES INTERVENED PROMPTLY WHEN PDC OFFICIALS CALLED TO REQUEST HELP. DESPITE EXTREME HOSTILITY OF AGITATED CROWD (400-500), SOME 20 SOLDIERS ACTED IN MANNER PDC SOURCE DESCRIBED AS "RAPID, COORDINATED, AND EFFECTIVE" TO CONVOY PDC MEMBERS OUT OF AREA TO SAFETY OF BARRACKS. PDC CONSIDERED MILITARY'S BEHAVIOR TO BE COURTEOUS AND CORRECT. SUBSEQUENT MILITARY COMMUNIQUE REFERRED TO PCD AS BEING "LEGAL PARTY," LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RECOGNIZING THAT GROUP'S RIGHT TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING. COMMUNIQUE ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WERE NOT ARRESTED, THAT THEY LEFT BARRACKS WHEN ORDER WAS RESTORED.

5. COMMENT: ACTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE BEGAN OCCURRING WITH FREQUENCY IN WEEKS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING WEEKEND OF SEPTEMBER 28, 1974. THEY CONTINUED THEREAFTER, GATHERING PACE AS TEMPO OF PARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITY INCREASED AND ELECTION CAMPAIGN

OPENED IN APRIL. ELECTION CAMPAIGN HAS NOW COME AND GONE, BUT POLITICAL VIOLENCE REMAINS. THESE THREE INCIDENTS ILLUSTRATE THE PROBLEM THAT PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES (PARTICULARLY THE MILITARY) MUST FACE UP TO SOONER OR LATER IF PUBLIC ORDER IS TO BE MAINTAINED.

6. IN FIRST TWO INCIDENTS, BEATINGS OCCURRED BEFORE MILITARY WAS ALERTED. IN CASE OF PDC, MILITARY WAS ABLE TO INTERVENE IN TIME. IT DID SO QUICKLY AND RESOLUTELY, IN A FASHION CONTRASTING FAVORABLY WITH PROCRASTINATION SHOWN ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS (SUCH AS LISBON MASS RALLY PDC CALLED IN FEBRUARY - REF B). REGARDLESS OF HOW ENCOURAGING MILITARY'S PROMPT ACTION AT EVORA MAY BE, THE FACT REMAINS THAT PUBLIC AUTHORITIES IN PORTUGAL TO DATE HAVE PROVED UNWILLING OR INCAPABLE OF FACING UP SQUARELY TO CHALLENGES POSED TO PUBLIC ORDER, ESPECIALLY WHEN CHALLENGES COME FROM LEFT. INCIDENTS AT BRAGANCA, CAXIAS, EVORA RAISE BASIC QUESTIONS AS TO REGIME'S ABILITY, EVEN SHOULD IT FIND THE WILL, TO DEAL WITH DANGEROUS PHENOMENON THAT HAS BECOME INGRAINED PART OF POLITICAL SCENE.
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